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Charivaria

NEUTRAL countries with frontiers adjoining Germany still fear that the FUEHRER may launch a new defensive on the Western Front.

There is no truth in the rumour that a Royal Air Force man has been dismissed the Service for dropping his pamphlets in dart form.

There are said to be still some areas in Germany where the inhabitants do not know that they are at war with England. But they must be wondering what all this peace is about.



When a school was threatened by floods in the Midlands it was found that none of the masters could swim and all the boys could. A senior scholar immediately volunteered to keep his Head above water.

"Wouldn't it be fine if England knew what Herr HITLER is doing," says the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. Yes. And it would be fine if Herr HITLER did, too.

"Pool tea, which with a Pool sausage, was threatened by the Ministry of Food as a successor to Pool petrol, is not yet to be."

News Chronicle.

Couldn't get them both into the petrol-tank, perhaps?

Bread-Fruit Tree?

"A plant has been installed which will provide dinners for between three and five hundred evacuees."

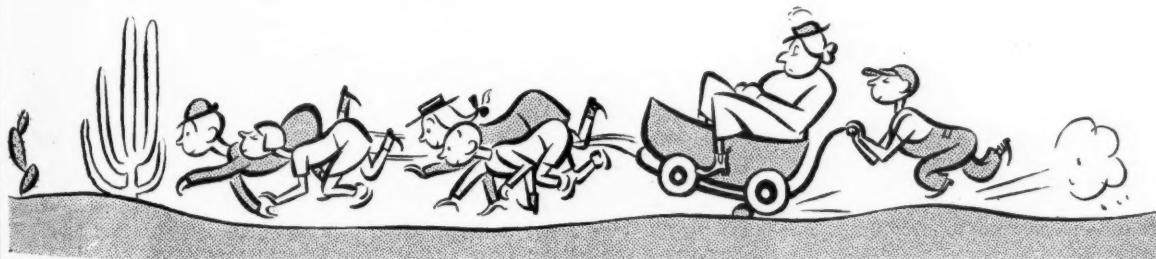
Macclesfield Paper.

On a fine afternoon behind the lines on the Western Front, British soldiers were seen teaching Frenchmen how to play cricket. Is this wise? Look how well Australia picked it up.



It is reported "from a reliable source" that Herr HITLER is secretly writing his memoirs. We can't think of any title better than "People Who Have Met Me."

A San Francisco mother of five children is attempting to push a perambulator across the U.S.A., and at the end of the first week reached a town fifty miles east of her starting-point. There the mater rests for the moment.





"The way they be goin' on, Garge, anybody would think war was inevitable."

Dim that Light, Please!

LUMINOUS arm-bands, white jackets, rear-lights for pedestrians—really this black-out talk is unending these days. But have you noticed all the talk is about black-outs in London and other big towns? As if we hadn't got black-outs in the country too! Indeed, I bet you our country black-outs are a lot better, finer and blacker than any of your town gloom.

To begin with, we started well up the course in the obscurity stakes. We had no shop-window problems—unless you count the oil-lamp that stood by the large cheese on the village shop-counter. No advertisements either—Farmer Turnip has not yet got "Best Grade A" in neon lettering outside his barn. And it was simple to deal with our street-lighting, because we have no street-lighting. We've never really needed it. To walk down the village street on dark nights, you first simply aimed straight for the light in old Mrs. Rumble's upper window. (She's bed-ridden and likes a candle all night.) From there you bore across towards Gossett's red blind and on to the right of it—keeping port to port as it were—for about ten paces. Then you waited till someone opened the door of "The Ship" at the far end of the street and gave you a guiding flash. As this was usually an "oculting white, three minutes interval," you could safely set a course straight for it. And finally go inside—which was probably what you came out for.

But I digress . . .

Though we didn't have to grapple with the more flamboyant forms of light, where we had real trouble was in dealing with our homes. For we in the country are on the whole less used to screening windows than people in town, who have the privacy question to consider. Many farms and cottages are quite isolated: there are no passers-by to look in. If there is a passer-by he doesn't look in. He's almost certainly a local farm-hand and knows just what he'll see—old Mrs. Dubble knitting with a cat precariously asleep on her sloping front and Mr. Dubble making notes of forthcoming sales in *The Mudshire Beacon-Courier*. The town-dweller, on the other hand, who doesn't draw his curtains after dark is quite apt to be disturbed at supper by a raucous laugh from the street and an encouraging: "Give 'im another 'elping, Ma!"

So darkening our houses took us a little longer to learn. Looking back in retrospect, it seems that for the first two weeks nothing could be heard from dusk to midnight but shouts outside of "Dim that light, please!" or "Put out that dim light!" interspersed with the ringing of telephone bells inside as we were informed out of the blue that we were showing a naked glow through a keyhole. We bought black paper, we bought drawing-pins, we lost drawing-pins, we unfortunately suddenly found drawing-pins, we failed to buy more black paper, we bought brown paper

instead; we begged, borrowed or stole more brown paper. And, by the way, when one begs or borrows brown paper in our village it's apt to be ripe, experienced and much-travelled brown paper. Many of our make-shift blinds smell strongly of fish and bear legends like "The Manager, The Mudshire & District Stores. Urgent," on one side and "To Mummy, with mummy happy returns from Pam," on the other.

Ultimately, however, we were hampered very efficiently into a state of Stygian gloom. And when I say efficiently I mean efficiently. We have enough people on the job to deal with Blackpool illuminations . . .

Dim that light, please! . . . That sounds like one of them! Excuse me . . .

I thought I had this desk-lamp shaded properly, but I see there's a drawing-pin hole in one side, which has probably coincided with a worn thread in the curtain. I wonder sometimes whether we are not perhaps overstuffed with wardens and special constables compared with more vulnerable and possibly even valuable areas. Our village of about fourteen hundred people altogether, including evacuees, has three head wardens, ten air wardens and several special constables as well as our own village P.C. Honest! You can go out and count them this minute if you like, as long as you don't show a light while going out, and don't count them by torch, but just by bumping into them . . .

Dim that light, please! . . . Excuse me again . . .

These brown-paper screens are all very well, but one must remember to shut the windows before putting them up for the night. Our cat came in just now without noticing the screen. She arrived spang through the brown paper like a circus-rider going through a hoop. I've put a coat over it—the hole, not the cat—and am now writing by the light of three candles.

The whole cat question in the village is rather difficult. The wardens say their eyes shine in the dark. One hears nothing but shouts of "Put that cat out," and calls of "Puss, puss, puss!" from the anxious owners all evening. White cats are at a premium . . .

Dim that light, please! . . . Excuse me . . . It's probably only a glow-worm, but I'd better be on the safe side. I'm now writing by the light of two candles.

That crash is, I think, an air warden falling over a rake or something. Out of the night that covers him black as the pit from pole to pole you can now hear him thanking whatever gods there be for his unconquerable soul. . . .

FORWARD
WIDEAWAY



"Ah, but you wait till you see our London fogs!"

Dim that light, please! . . . His head is bloody but unbowed, evidently, and I am now writing by the light of one candle.

You know, I wonder whether the darkening of the countryside is not being enforced *too* strictly. In my simple way I feel that the Germans are not really after our village, though Farmer Turnip, who has a very good harvest stored, thinks otherwise. "Bet they've marked my wheat down for a bomb," he says gloomily. "Government says they're trying to starve us out!" But still in my simple way I have an idea they're after the big towns, and since human nature will always show some percentage of error it means that the proportion of accidental light-showing in a town as against that in the country will be in relation to the populations concerned and thus still give away the positions of big centres. Therefore the regulations ought not to be so rigidly enforced in the country; then the raiders would see an even distribution of what lights were inadvertently showing, wouldn't know where they were and would end by unloading their eggs in Farmer Turnip's seven-acre. But then he'd probably say that's just what they were after. "Due for ploughing up, she were! Told you they're trying to starve us out! . . ."

Dim that light, please! . . . Excuse me . . .

I am now trying to write in a complete XXXXXXXXXX A. A.

Pleasure for Plutocrats

OH, what could be counted more fair
Than being propelled through the air,
Levitated along
With the wind's wild song,
Looking down
Over village and town
And returning the gaze
Of the cattle that graze;
With the sheep like ants' eggs
And the pigs without legs
And the horses' broad backs
And the blonde-headed stacks
Of barley and wheat
At our feet?
And what could be counted more jolly
Than being as high as a holly,
In reach
Of the best of the beech

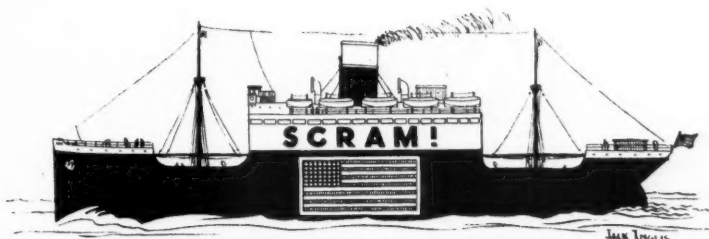
And at grips
With the haws and the hips,
And to find that no wall
Is too tall
And no hedge is too high
To be scaled by the eye
(Or the nose
If it chose);
To let the glance linger
On things like syringa
And peep
On each anthracite heap?
What is nicer than sitting quite tight
While allotments fly by on the right
And bed-sitting rooms glide
On the opposite side,
While behind us the Erica blows
And in front are the new bungalows?
One moment we jog
On the brink of a bog
And the one after that
We adjoin this desirable flat.
It is pleasing to skim by a hoarding
Recording
Vast vistas of teeth
And great lips both above and beneath,
Or to read between lines
Of inn-signs
And watch an innkeeper
Loom up, while his creeper,
More rubicund still,
Peeps over his sill
Seeing what it can see,
As do we.
And what can be counted more fun
Than to sail in the wake of the sun
And so soon
To go chasing the moon?
It's much nicer than driving a car
And glueing our eyes to the tar.
Yes, it's terribly thrilling for us
To be back on the top of a bus.

o o

"Any reference in the preceding paragraph to a railway undertaking shall be construed as including a reference to any undertaking carried on by the person by whom the railway undertaking is carried on; and any reference in this Regulation to an undertaking shall be construed as including a reference to part of an undertaking."

Defence Regulations, 1939.

Oh, good. We were worried for a moment.



War, Dora, and What Not

AFORTNIGHT ago I was in a position—who more so?—to state authoritatively that the German High Command was about to begin a *Blitzkrieg*; and I hasten to add (since a gentleman discovering the word *Lebensraum* in *Punch* has sworn that he will never read the paper again if we “write it entirely in German”) that a *Blitzkrieg* is a lightningwar.

It is not perhaps a very good word for what the German High Command intended to do.

Their plan (as I understood it from a friend who has an aunt employed at the French Foreign Office) was to attack with twelve thousand tanks the impregnable steel and concrete of the Maginot Line simultaneously along the whole extent from North to South, at the same time executing a turning mechanised movement through the impassable snows of Switzerland, a penetrating cavalry thrust through the trackless forests and unfathomed morasses of Luxembourg, and an enveloping circumambulatory infantry round-about march through Holland and Belgium, both of which countries had been for many weeks under water.

IN the meantime an attack of unprecedented ferocity was to be launched on the East Coast of England through lanes of floating mines by an expeditionary party which consisted of troop transports, destroyers, U-boats, galliasses, heavy bombers, catamarans, fighter planes, penteconters, streamers and balloons. This party (I gathered) would be in time to get the night train from Harwich and London at about the same moment as the spear-heads of the more southerly armies were taking their seats for Calais, Paris, Amiens, Marseilles and the Côte d'Azur.

An obvious supplementary manœuvre (it was whispered) would be to blow the British Fleet to bits off the coast of Scotland, drop incendiary bombs and gases redolent of various garden herbs all over the Midland counties, and to sow the North of England with the germs of terrible infectious diseases, so that everybody in Manchester and Oldham would at the same hour be stricken down with measles, and everybody in Sheffield and Huddersfield with mumps.

Nor was it to be forgotten (as though I should be likely to forget!) that the Allies would suffer a further annoyance owing to the blockade of the entire Atlantic by a pocket battleship and the outbreak of spontaneous Nazi uprisings in Arabia, South Africa, Nicaragua and Paraguay.

So great, so full of frightfulness, my informant assured me, was to be the German lightningwar. The conception did not actually spring (I was reminded) from the brain of the German Army Staff, but in full battle-dress (like the goddess Athene) from that of Herr Hitler himself. But the German Army Staff in the intervals of resigning and being sacked are a very docile set of men, and the only general (caught unawares and actually in uniform) who received the all-high command merely asked for an extra supply of gum-boots, skates and water-wings. “And then,” he said, “my Leader, you have merely to press the button at Godesberg and we shall do the rest.”

I have always longed to see that button. . . .

AND now the plan, so bold in its simplicity, appears to have fallen through. There is to be a quiet Christmas on the Western Front at any rate. Paper stockings are to be hung out on the Siegfried—Siegfried was an Aryan hero—are to be hung out on the Siegfried Line, and the

Leader, wearing a white beard, will himself fill them with juiceless oranges and sweetmeats made of wood-fibre, and if the troops complain they will be sent back to concentration camps and soundly beaten. Our own army will have plum puddings and cigarettes and darts.

But what of us poor civilians at home? What of Sir John Anderson's *Blitzkrieg* on the British Front? We must still endure the totally blacked-out nights, the half-unbattered days. We are surrounded, and enfiladed by controls. Business is bogged in its trenches. We can be prosecuted, it seems, if we praise the enemy or harbour his exiled foes. For freedom's sake we have surrendered our liberties. There is nothing to do after dinner. We are almost obliged to read books. Petrol is rarer than attar of roses. There is only one kind of tea. We have nothing to console us except the intoxication of football pools and the excitement of inaccurate air-raid alarms; and if we ring up the Ministry of Information to give them the “all clear” signal there is no one to take the telephone message, because the whole staff is hiding underground.

Myself, I have been most overwhelmed mentally if not physically by a strange order from the Censor's Department during the last few days. He has told me not “to publish reports or pictures indicating the effect of recent gales, wind, rain or snow, or depicting the general state of the weather in any part of the United Kingdom or the surrounding seas.”

HE has told me this privately and confidentially, but since the suppression of this news is well known to everyone who listens to the wireless, and the whole matter has been explained in the daily papers, perhaps I am divulging no secret when I state it here. Unlike most of my fellow-countrymen, I have always been very fond of talking and writing about the weather, and now that the almond blossoms are budding, and many of the birds are back, and from every hedgerow corner comes, carried on the gentle blast of the north-easterly zephyr, some fresh reminder that it is my bounden duty to keep the Nazi Government thoroughly fogged, bewildered and confused about the march of the seasons—Oh, well, cut out the umbrella from that picture on page 157 and put in a few rationed lambs dancing with delight.

And yet I don't know. . . . Should we have grumbled so much about D.O.R.A. if there *had* been a *Blitzkrieg*? Would the lightningwar perhaps have arrived if we hadn't had D.O.R.A.? And shall we have any time or heart to complain about D.O.R.A. if the Austrian paperhanger presses his button to-morrow? Or in the early part of next year?

EVON.

My Bonny

(To be sung to the old tune)

MY Bonny is stationed at [REDACTED]
But nobody knows it, you see,
Except all the people of [REDACTED]
And all his relations and me.

The [REDACTED] he is manning at [REDACTED]
Sticks seventy feet in the air,
But don't tell a soul it's at [REDACTED]
For *nobody* knows it is there. V. G.



DOING HIS BEST

"It's Dora this, and Dora that and Dora you're a flop,
But it's 'Thank you, Uncle Dora,' when the bombs begin to drop."



THE SEASON 1939-40

"It Has Now Been Revealed . . ."

—Quotation from the B.B.C.

AFTER Laura, like everybody else, had been told that her country needed her services, and that without delay, and after she had offered them right and left and had been informed on all sides that there was no sort of work for her anywhere at all—after this pleasantly encouraging experience she took the wholly unoriginal course of going into Gloucestershire to help Cousin Florence.

It was at that time uncertain whether Cousin Florence was to receive four Bethnal Green evacuated children under five, or three permanent invalids with their attendant, from Poplar. But whichever it was to be, nothing could be more certain than that Cousin Florence needed help.

Even in the matter of the black-out, Laura said afterwards, Cousin Florence had not been really successful—leaving an extraordinary number of drawing-pins strewn round all the windows every night after pinning up the brown paper and the linings of grand-mamma's older petticoats. And both the paper and the petticoat-linings were more or less giving way by the time Laura arrived with, as Cousin Florence

said, all these brilliant modern contrivances of a couple of dyed curtains and a pot of blue paint for the kitchen skylight.

Cousin Florence herself, like the brown paper and the linings, was pretty well giving way—mostly under the thought of receiving the evacuees. She said that she would willingly pay five hundred a year if she could thereby avoid all personal responsibility for them, and Laura did not like to point out the reason why this suggestion could hardly be called a very good one. Probably, however, Cousin Florence saw it for herself, because she never made the offer to the Billeting Officer.

Nor was this for want of opportunity. When the Billeting Officer, known in happier times as Our Infant School Mistress, wasn't going into Cousin Florence's dear little house—with, alas! its five bed- and two sitting-rooms—she was coming out of it, and when she wasn't doing either she was ringing up on the telephone.

Cousin Florence said that her life was no longer her own, and very soon her house wouldn't be either. No one, said Cousin Florence, was more willing

than she was to put an end to Hitler and his ways—and that in spite of the fact that this was the second world war she had had to put up with—but an Englishman's home was his castle.

Laura, not wishing to cast the slightest doubt on Cousin Florence's perfect right to refer to "Mon Abri" as a castle if she wished to, then made the great mistake of asking whether Cousin Florence hadn't had to put up with the South African War as well as the European one; and this was a dead failure, as she ought to have remembered it was bound to be.

Cousin Florence replied sharply that, naturally, a mere tot in the nursery hadn't worried very much about South Africa, and that all she could remember about it, practically speaking, was a song about somebody who was going out there to dream, 'mid shot and shell, of his own Bluebell—which she had always thought singularly unsoldier-like and, in fact, downright dangerous.

If Laura's own account of what she then said to herself is an accurate one, it was to the effect that Cousin Florence had not only been a good deal past

toothood at the time of the Boer War, but also in the days of Rorke's Drift, Omdurman, and possibly Sevastopol into the bargain.

And a subconscious recollection, she said, came to her as well of Cousin Florence two years ago at the Swiss frontier on her way back from Lucerne, suddenly inquiring out of the blue: What happened in the event of a slightly-false entry on a passport being discovered? And both Laura's conscious and subconscious mind, for once at one, united in reminding her that no one, with the unavoidable exception of some unknown person employed in compiling the census returns, had ever been privileged to know in what year Cousin Florence first saw the light of day from No. 274 Cheyney Walk, Chelsea.

Cousin Florence, who had been depressed before Laura's particularly unfortunate reference, now sank into a state little short of melancholia, and not short of it at all when the Billeting

Officer rang up to say that two council-school teachers and either two or else three little boys would be arriving by the last train on Saturday, due in at 11.55 P.M.

Laura tried to cheer her up by pointing out that no instance had ever yet been really authenticated of evacuees arriving either when or where they were expected, but Cousin Florence answered that that, in a way, only made it worse. And she said it so frantically that Laura induced her to go and lie down while she herself rang up the doctor, knowing that all the patients had been turned out of the Cottage Hospital days ago and that the doctor had been told his services weren't required, there or anywhere else, by his country.

He came round immediately—obviously hardly able to believe that anyone was really going to make use of him—and said he could easily make out a certificate that would dispense Cousin Florence from having to take

in the two council-school teachers and the two, or three, little boys; and he sat down at the writing-table and wrote it then and there.

Laura, in her own words, flew like the wind to show it to Cousin Florence, and she said it was quite wonderful to see the change that came over her as she read it. But it was as nothing to the wonder of hearing her say as she handed it back:

"Thank him a thousand times, dear, but I think it would be even safer if instead of just 'Over seventy years of age,' he were to put 'Well over seventy.'"

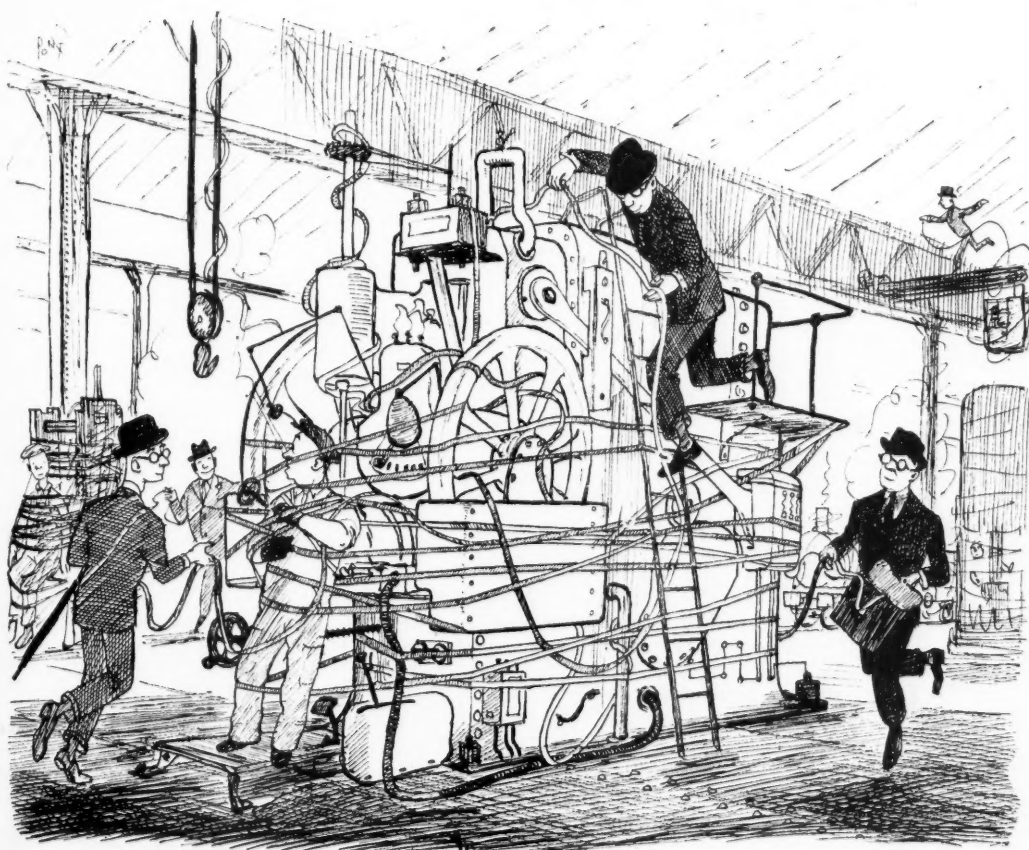
E. M. D.

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"Two thousand Leicester small ship-keepers at a meeting at the De Montfort Hall, Leicester, decided that if no notice were taken of their request that the Government should cancel the order they would ignore it and carry on business as usual."

Daily Paper.

In spite of U-boats.



POPULAR MISCONCEPTIONS—BUREAUCRATS AT WORK

At the Pictures

CHASERS AND WAITERS

Thunder Afloat (Director: GEORGE B. SEITZ) will probably have a success that its makers never expected, unless they foresaw our present interest in the activities of U-boats. At any other time it would be just one of those stories about rival toughs whose professed enmity is a cloak for warm-heartedness; but now, with the limelight shifted from the characters of the men to their work, it becomes red-hot topical stuff about how submarines are chased, complete with a hint of the feelings of the men in the submarines concerned.

The year is 1918, and the rival toughs are *Thorson* (WALLACE BEERY) and *Blake* (CHESTER MORRIS). They begin the picture as skippers of tugs competing for a barge-towing contract, and end it in the U.S. Navy. *Thorson* has a daughter (VIRGINIA GREY), so it isn't hard for you to guess that part of the plot, too . . .

The framework of the story, in fact, is ordinary enough. Unconcerned by the war till a U-boat sinks his tug, *Thorson* then regards it as a personal quarrel between him and the U-boat commander; and I need hardly say that things work out so that this very commander is the man on whom he gets his own back. But the picture is well done, and the accident of its extreme topicality makes it far more interesting than it might have been. You shouldn't forget, though, that this is only an accident.

These French players seem to come over in waves. There was a DANIELLE DARRIEUX period, there was a FRANÇOISE ROSAY period, and now we seem to be in a FERNANDEL period. *Les Rois du Sport* (Director: PIERRE COLOMBIER) pairs him with another great man, RAIMU, in a farcical story in which he is mistaken (could you ever mistake FERNANDEL?) for an Australian boxing champion. I take the nationality from a poster displayed in the picture, which no one else seems to

have noticed; for certainly there's nothing Australian about the man's speech, which rouses many an unintended laugh from English audiences. He's supposed to speak only English, but he does so with a strong Continental accent, and his notion of a furious threat is "I panch yeoo daown!"

FERNANDEL and RAIMU are Marseilles waiters who win the waiters' race by a trick with banana-skins. Next FERNANDEL appears as the goalkeeper in the football match between

POWELL, BRIAN DESMOND HURST, and ADRIAN BRUNEL. Each, I suppose, had charge of a different department, and that of course is the trouble with the picture: too many different departments, different moods, that don't fit with each other. The list of well-known players (headed by RALPH RICHARDSON and MERLE OBERON) at the beginning is imposing enough, but most of them appear only to say a word or two, and the greater part of the picture might be called a

"documentary." There are some effective cuts from news-reels, including HITLER and British book-makers alternately shouting the odds . . .

But the part most people will be attracted to see is the reconstruction of the raid on Kiel. As you will have read, a small part of this is no reconstruction but the real thing: the men you see climbing out of the planes at the end of that successful journey are the men who actually made it. The episode is exciting and well done. Then comes an account of an imaginary enemy raid on Britain, showing the co-ordination of the methods used to fight it: all most reassuring, as you would expect. This too is exciting and full of interest. You look over the shoulders of the men in charge at "Fighter Command" and watch the little symbols representing invaders and fighters being moved across a huge map: you hear the telephoned instructions; you see some of the battle in the air. Of course all ends well for our side, and Miss OBERON and Mr. RICHARDSON, off

duty, go for a walk in that ideally sunlit and rural England so familiar to cinema patrons; Mr. RICHARDSON falling asleep while Miss OBERON speaks some sentimental lines about goodness and truth and beauty (notice those "ands," that's fine writing). I have an uneasy feeling that his falling asleep was not intended as a criticism but merely the result of his having been up all night winning the war . . .

I don't want to carp, though: such moments as this are very few in the film, which is entertaining and good propaganda. Everybody will go to see it anyway. R. M.



A FAR-AWAY LOOK

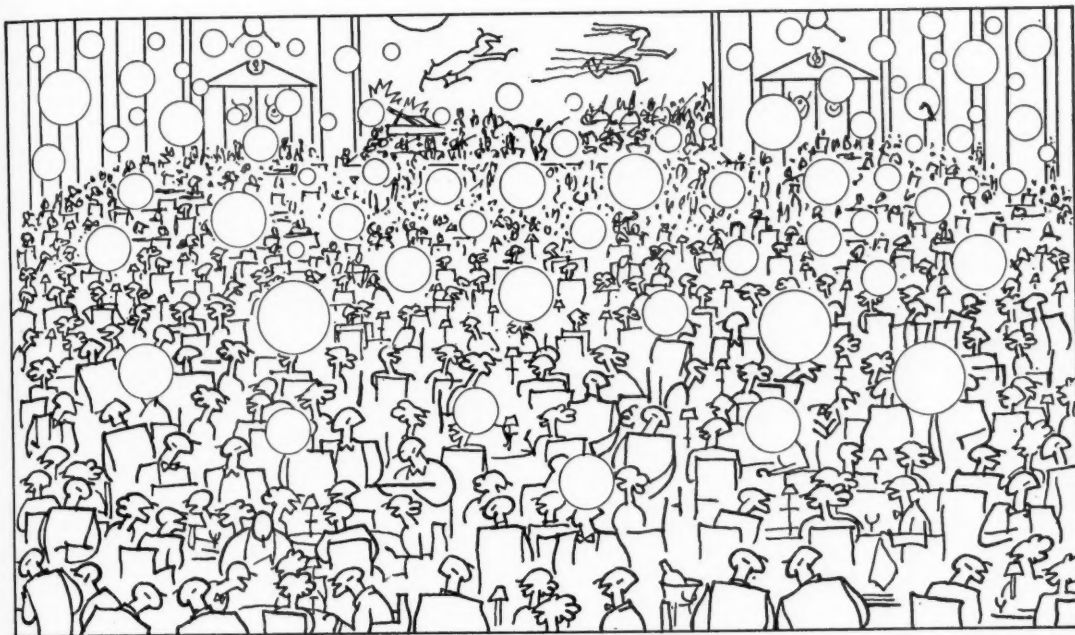
Thorson WALLACE BEERY

the Canebière and Montmartre. In spite of the fact that he lets goals through while he argues with his prospective father-in-law (RAIMU) in the crowd, his side wins; and what with one thing and another RAIMU finds the money he won on the match invested in *Jim Sandford*, the Australian boxer. Then there is the usual comic film boxing match . . . It might be dreadful without FERNANDEL and RAIMU, but since they are there much of it is very funny.

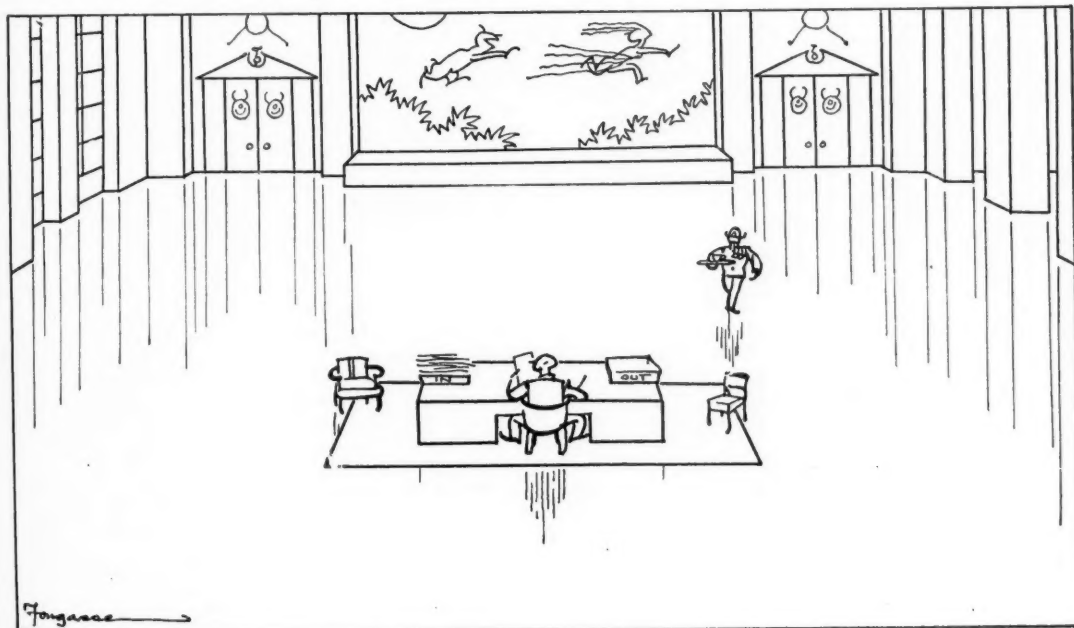
Three directors are named for ALEXANDER KORDA's propaganda film, *The Lion Has Wings*: MICHAEL

THE CHANGING FACE OF BRITAIN

XIII.—THE GRAND BALLROOM OF THE HOTEL SUBLIME



1



2



Now that the black-out is established, why not use it to show our real attitude towards the enemy?

From the Water Front

Pond Petrol

PPOOL petrol." Yes, but who has been keeping fish in the pool? What exactly is this liquid? We have just put a match to it. It does not burn.

For six weeks our two little engines, lovingly tended, have stood up toughly to the war. They started like birds and stuck it like lions. Uncomplainingly, they have cooled themselves with the filthy waters of the tideway. They have sucked mud and grit and small sticks and minced wood and plants and bits of newspapers into their bosoms; yet never once has the circulating system been wholly blocked. (When people ask us what is our cooling system we answer "Mud-cooled.") For eight weeks the ship has fought her way through the forest of timber which the Port of London Authority (our employers) keep floating up and down for the discouragement of small vessels; and, unlike many others, we have preserved both our modest propellers intact. For eight weeks, using care, in spite of the black-out and the said Sargasso Sea, we have avoided collisions, crashes, stoppages and marine misfortunes of every kind. One of the great colliers charged into and demolished the steps by Cleopatra's Needle the other night, and had to be

beached. Such was the force of the impact that it is a wonder she didn't bring down the old Needle as well. Two days later, in broad daylight, we saw a tug, caught by the eddies (and going too fast) miss one of the two bridge-holes of Waterloo Bridge and charge into the timber flanking. Another tug with a long tow of lighters got them knotted round a pier of — Bridge in the dark. Perceiving the "practical men" in such troubles we amateurs have gratefully acknowledged our good fortune in avoiding them. We have even resisted the efforts of the "practical men" to break us up by speeding past and dashing us against the sides of iron lighters and piers with their wash. (On the river, as on the roads, too many seem to think that by going much faster than they did before they will become more important and help to win the war.) They have broken our crockery but not our spirit or our timbers; we have hoisted the signal "H L" ("It is not safe to go so fast") and defied them. They do not understand it; but it pleases us, and does no harm.

For six weeks our little engines even stood up toughly to the Government fuel, whatever it was. (In those days it must have included some combustible material.) And then they began to sigh, to whisper, to mutter, to snort, to cough, to spit, and, by this or that sound, to show the signs of suffering and incipient reluctant mutiny.

Now they are in open mutiny—the starboard engine more open and more vocal than the port. We used to boast as we approached, against the tide, one of the two "temporary" arches of the mess we still call Waterloo Bridge: "See how we go through here!" For the tide must run here at something like 4 m.p.h., and we did not care. Now we do care; and we boast no more. We think ourselves lucky if we get through at all.

Now that we have taken down the "filter" on the petrol-lines-of-communication of the starboard engine, now that we have peered at the contents thereof, we are no longer surprised at the mutinous and bronchial noises of the sufferer. If our own life-stream were shown to contain such an odd collection of foreign and unhelpful bodies and liquids we should not expect to be capable of uttering any sound at all.

Mind you, we do not wish to be unpatriotic or petulant. We have not yet met anyone who was able to give a wholly intelligible or satisfying explanation of the purpose, principle, or practice of petrol-pooling. But we gather that here is one of those systems which must be allowed to "settle down": that during the "interim period" strange and saddening things may happen, which will never be repeated. Some have even said that just now the lucky A may draw from the pool a parcel of petrol fit for a royal speed-boat, while the unlucky B may get six units of a liquid unworthy to drive a pram. We innocently and contentedly and patriotically accept all this; and all we have to say is that we must have been especially unlucky in the particular parcel which at present fills our tanks and tins or splutters feebly in our carburettors and things. We might observe that this is a little harsh, because if A's car stops on the King's Highway it stops and A remains alive though stationary, while if our little boat stops just above Waterloo Bridge on a fierce ebb-tide we do not remain stationary and anything may happen. But we waive all that.

As we have remarked already, we took down (rather timidly) the starboard engine's "filter" and peered at the contents. It reminded us of the old days when we used to clean out the aquarium, or examine frog-spawn and water-fleas through a microscope. The filter is little; it holds about three times a thimbleful: *but it was multitudinous with foreign bodies.* We swear we saw water-beetles there.

consumption matter? The supply must be inexhaustible—especially on the river. We filled up our first form as follows:—

FUEL REPORT

Day	Description of Fuel	Amount Received	Daily Mileage
MONDAY ..	Unprintable	Ten Bucketfuls	Disappointing
TUESDAY ..	Pond Petrol	"	Miraculous
WEDNESDAY	Blasphemous	"	Two Coughs and
THURSDAY .	Asbestos-water	"	A Spit
FRIDAY ..	Looks like the Serpentine	"	Not
SATURDAY ..	Barking Creek	"	So
SUNDAY ..	Regent's Canal?	"	Hot

A. P. H.



"No, no; you don't get my point: what you want is something that's no good for a cold."

and little water-weeds; a fresh-water-louse or two; grit, sand, and some infant rocks. Also there were queer little bubbles of a liquid different from the rest—paraffin, even petrol perhaps?

And mark you, we are not of those careless mariners who pour their fuel naked into the tank. We pass it not merely through a filter-funnel, but a square of chamois-leather as well. It follows, therefore, that the "fuel" must contain infinitesimal invisible organisms which are breeding in the tank.

Well, we must not complain. *C'est la guerre*. But someone ought to write a song about this stuff. Something on the lines of that admirable ditty of the Great War—Phase One (this is Phase Two)—called "Lloyd George's Beer." We remember one passage only:

"Lloyd George's Bee—ee—ear!

It isn't dea—ea—ear.

Oh! Horatio Bottomley arose and said

To Mr. Asquith in the 'Old King's Head':*

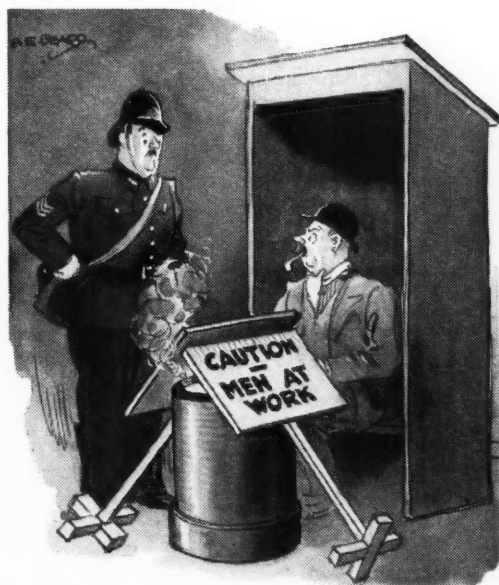
'Here's death to our enemies, and may they be as dead

As Lloyd George's Beer!'"

* * * * *

What we do resent a little is having to fill up forms about our consumption of this liquid. What on earth does the

* Charming picture



"When's this war going to finish, Sergeant? I want to fry some bacon."

Behind the Lines

VII.—Farewell to Butter

LATIN or French, it's as you please—
No, no, it's all the same to me:
In Latin, then, *Quot homines,*
Tot (so to speak) *sententiæ*;
In French, to make the matter plain,
Chacun—(the accent's up to you:
Moisten the lips and start again)—
Chacun (that's better) *à son goût*.

It may so be (one never knows),
My readers are a brainless lot—
There is a brainlessness which shows
And one which, luckily, does not.
So who can tell? In English, then,
Devoid of passion, anger, haste,
The words come starkly off my pen:
One cannot argue about taste.

I'm fond of Butter. There are some
Love operatic music more.
I do not blame them, let them hum,
If so they must, the *Tosca* score.
I love my Butter. Those who can
May hymn on each succeeding week,
Their preference for *Charlie Chan*—
I dote on Butter: Let me speak.

There is, as must have been observed,
Butter and butter. Mine is salt.
For years my taste has never swerved,
My judgment never been at fault.
Saltless: the unrewarding stare
One gives to jokes one has not seen.
Salted: I take the morning air
As radiant as a May-day Queen.

The ways of Nature still are strange
Even to me whose interests,
Like Dr. Johnson's, lightly range
From *edelweiss* to winter vests.

I know a little of the Law,
And something of Queen Anne
(deceased);
But this I know not: How we draw
Sea-butter from an earth-bound
beast.

It may be that a cow will yield
My sea-tanged butter only if
She pastures on some spray-blown field
That tops a tall tide-riven cliff:
Maybe the milkmaid as she milks
Dreams of a sailor-lad; maybe
Her name, so nearly *Whelks* as *Wilks*,
Gives just that something of the
sea.

The nearness of a farmyard Drake
(Or is this asking much too much?)
Might by a natural mistake
Provide the necessary touch.
More likely that some swallow sings
Sea-shanties to the brooding cow,
From which sweet harmony there
springs
The flavour—but I know not how.

I know not. And no longer care . . .
Some craven on an office-stool,
With half an idle hour to spare,
Plans for his lord another pool.
Ah, me! that by this mad caprice
Sea-butter joins the Great Beyond
And leaves me here with axle-grease
Drawn stagnant from an inland
pond.

Farewell to Butter! Strange and sad
How little now it means to me.
To ration it is but to add
Fresh insult to deep injury.
Keep, keep your slab of vaseline—
Be it three ounces or a pound,
I give it to the War Machine
To make its silly wheels go round.
A. A. M.

Fiat Lux

(1) *Greater Consolidated Electricity
Corp., Ltd., Warblesdown Branch,*
29th August, 1939

To John Smith, Esq.,
"Mon Repos,"
Warblesdown.

DEAR SIR,—Unless the sum of
£3 1s. 7d. due from you for electricity
supplied to 31.7.39 is paid within seven
days the supply of current to your
premises will be discontinued. I have
to remind you that a charge of ten
shillings is made for reconnection.

Yours faithfully,
DUDLEY WITHERSPOON,
Secretary.

(2) INTER-OFFICE MEMO
SUBJECT: *John Smith. Unpaid A/c.*
DATE: 6.9.39 TIME: 10.30 A.M.

Mrs. John Smith phoned and asked
if our notice of 29.8.39 effective. Her
husband had been mobilised and she
had been away evacuating children.
Advised her to send cheque at once
otherwise she would be disconnected.
She said she would.

A. P. L.,
Public Relations Dept.

(3) WORK MEMO
DATE: 6.9.39
Instructions: Disconnect "Mon Repos,"
Warblesdown.

H. O. C.
For Engineer.

(4) *Received from Mrs. Smith, "Mon
Repos," Warblesdown sum of £3 1s. 7d.
in respect of July A/c.*
P. C. D., Accountant.

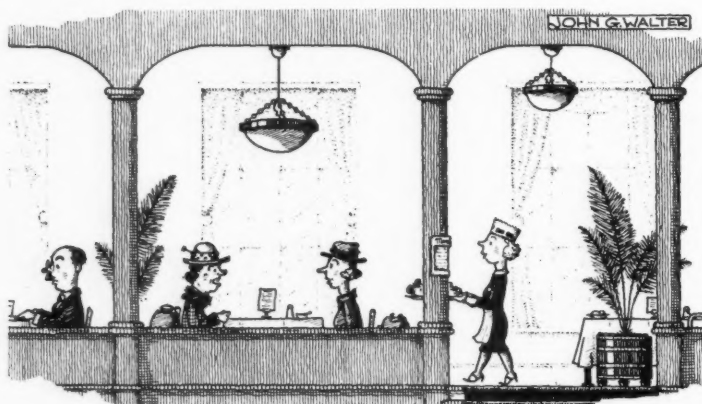
(5) INTER-OFFICE MEMO
SUBJECT: *John Smith. Unpaid A/c.*
DATE: 6.9.39 TIME: 4.15 P.M.

Mrs. Smith phoned to say that
neither lights nor wireless would work
and could we give some explanation.
Promised to phone her back.

Memo.—Why is supply disconnected
after payment made?—A. F. L.
Accts. did not advise Engineer of
payment.—H. O. C.

Engineer did not check up with
A/cs. before carrying out disconnection.
P. C. D.

(6) INTER-OFFICE MEMO
SUBJECT: *John Smith. Unpaid A/c.*
DATE: 6.9.39 TIME: 8.15 P.M.
Called and saw Mrs. Smith and



"I WAS A GLAMOROUS SPY IN THE LAST WAR, BUT THE
GOVERNMENT SEEMS TO THINK IT CAN MANAGE WITHOUT
MY SERVICES THIS TIME."

apologised for disconnection. She very dissatisfied. Pointed out that workmen came while she was out, and trespassed in garden to cut off supply. She threatened to sue us and report us to Home Office, Police, Ministry of Economic Warfare and Mr. Hore-Belisha. Offered to reconnect immediately on payment of 10s. fee and £5 new deposit. Mrs. Smith rejects these terms, says that candle-light is very becoming and who wants electricity anyhow when you must paint the bulbs black and could I lend her half a dozen candles and give her the address of the Gas Company.

A. F. L.

9.30 P.M. Saw Mrs. Smith again and threw her up two night-lights to bedroom window. She is now inquiring the cost of gas-pipes. Please note:—

- (a) Office car damaged in collision with unknown obstruction on way.
- (b) Trousers badly torn by Smith's dog. Please pass enclosed vouchers to A/cs. Dept.

A. F. L.

(7) INTER-OFFICE MEMO

SUBJECT: John Smith. Unpaid A/c.

DATE: 7.9.39

TIME: 10.15 A.M.

To Private Dudley Witherspoon,
5th Mudshire Regt.

DEAR WITHERSPOON,—Herewith John Smith file. We have rather slipped up a bit. What do you advise? Can we waive £5 deposit?

A. F. L.

(8) Bracken Camp,
Mudshire.

8.9.39

DEAR L.—Slipped up! The affair Smith had already reached my ears. At 8.30 A.M. yesterday I was ordered to report to the Major—Major John Smith, M.C., T.D.—Yes, you have guessed aright. It is the same John Smith, and he sat there with his wife's letter in his hand and told me for some twenty minutes and without much repetition what he thought of (a) the G.C. Elec. Corp'n., Ltd.; (b) you, and (c) me. His opinion of you is one which I largely share, but I would point out that I am apparently destined to go through the war as Major John Smith's batman—as he pleasantly said, in that position he can best superintend my gradual redemption.

All I can say is if you don't reconnect free of charge and throw in a couple of cookers, an electric iron and half a dozen immersion heaters as a sop my life will best be terminated for the happiness of all concerned.

Yours,

D. WITHERSPOON.

(9)

"Mon Repos,"

Warblesdown.

12.9.39

DEAR COMPANY,—Thank you very much for your lovely present. I have long wanted an electric washer and in view of this I am cancelling my trespass action and negotiations with the Gas Company.

I also return one night-light, as I did not use both.

Kind regards.

Yours sincerely,

IDA SMITH.

Choral Optimism

"Last Monday evening the Rev. T. —, of — Methodist Church, gave an instructive address on the prophet Jeremiah. The choir sang the hymn, 'Some day we'll understand' . . ."—Burnley Paper.

o o

The Human Touch

"DEAR MADAM,

We have pleasure in advising you that the article kindly left for repair is now ready.

We are, Dear

Yours truly, —"

Card from Watchmakers.



"You go an' fetch the Bo'sun a clip under the ear an' I'll photo you doin' it. I'll call it 'Mutiny in the Merchant Navy' an' you can 'ave 'arf the money I'll get from the newspapers."



"Have you a book called 'Mein Kampf' by somebody or other?"

The Tub-Trap

THREE of us children,
mother and dad,
used to go to market
(when I was a lad)
riding in the tub-trap
over the wold,
with rugs wrapped round
us
to keep out the cold:
as grandfather used it
(so they say)
jogging on to market
on market-day.

We didn't mind the rain
and we didn't mind snow—
there were so many things
to see and know;
we never used to hurry
but we never were late
in getting to the inn
where we used to bait;
and on the way home
we could stop for a chat,

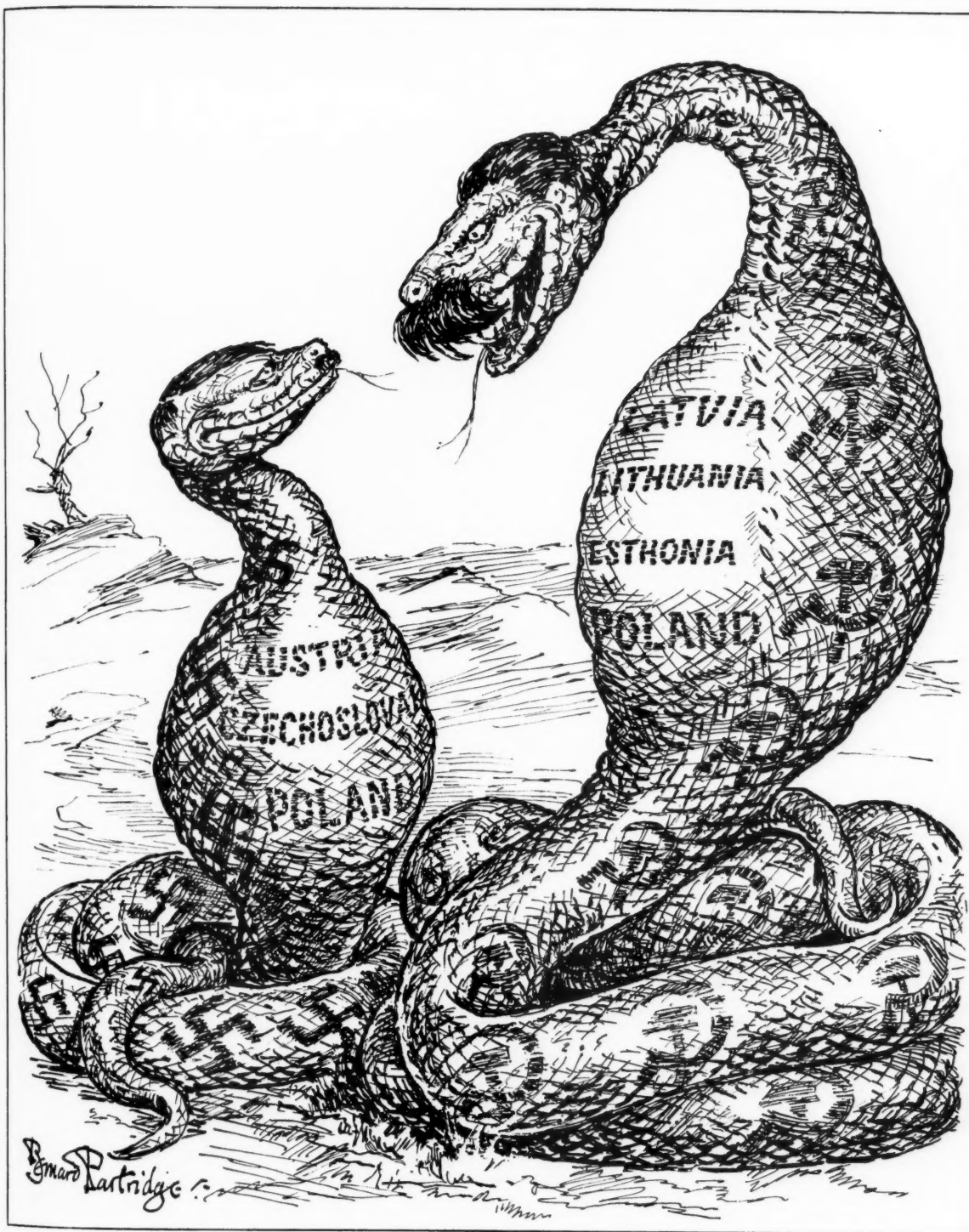
with a gig or a cart,
on this and that.

We had plenty of time
to see the land
and the life in the soil
on either hand:
and we knew what grew
in every field
(the quality and quantity
of the yield)
all the way
from our high wheat
down to the town's
first coggled street.
And the roads were grassed
like country lanes—
and sometimes we
could take the reins!

But then we bought
a motor-car
which carried us faster
and took us far:
the tub-trap's days,

we said, were dead
and we pushed the trap
in the wagon-shed.

But now we've pulled it
out again
to face the sunshine
and the rain;
we've polished all
the harness and
the whip's relaxed
and its feel is grand;
we've put on one
new rubber tyre;
the pony's fit
and full of fire—
though petrol's rationed
we've a rare old way
of getting to market
on market-day.
Aye, we're back to the times—
and they're not so bad—
when we used to go to market
when I was a lad.



THE TWO CONSTRUCTORS

"I don't know about helping you, Adolf, but I *do* understand your point of view!"

2

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Impressions of Parliament

Synopsis of the Week

Tuesday, October 31st.—Lords: Discussions on Trade and Internment.

Commons: Prices of Goods Bill given Third Reading. Debate on latest aspects of D.O.R.A.

Wednesday, November 1st.—Lords: Debate on Problems arising from Evacuation.

Commons: Debate on Old Age Pensions.

Thursday, November 2nd.—Lords: Debate on India and War Aims.

Commons: P.M.'s statement on Progress of War. Debate on Evacuation and A.R.P.

Tuesday, October 31st.—According to the best theories of modern economic warfare business-men from neutral countries should be met with red-carpeted gangways and military bands, and passed in lush motor-cars from one feast to the next. The maintenance of a sound currency depends very much on them, and therefore it was a most grave complaint of Lord STRABOLGI's this afternoon when he accused the Government of making it hard for these

the Dominions, added Lord GIFFORD, were finding us inaccessible. For the Government, Lord COBBHAM frankly admitted that communications (owing chiefly to the disorganisation of transport) and business-men had been delayed, but he said that everything was now being done to make amends.

Pressed in the Commons to explain the hold-up in officer's pay, Mr. HORE-BELISHA insisted that in the main it was due to officers or units having failed to give proper instructions to banks. He urged Members to bring him cases still outstanding after to-day, the pay-day for October.

After the Prices of Goods Bill had been peacefully disposed of, Mr. FOOT opened up on a subject dear to his heart, the maintenance of civic liberties. These, he held, were gravely and unnecessarily threatened by the latest edition of DORA; the country was faced by two enemies, Nazis abroad and potential Nazis at home. Supporting him, Mr. KINGSLEY GRIFFITH claimed that habeas corpus had been finally abolished and that the Government could legally reproduce a German concentration camp if it wished.

Sir JOHN ANDERSON replied. He defended his power to detain those who were not strictly enemy aliens by reminding the House that technical British subjects could be alien in sympathy and that German women had married British subjects only just before the war, but he admitted his dislike for the idea of a curfew, which would only be applied in an extreme emergency. As for the regulation dealing with propaganda, it was a necessary protection against the kind of campaign which had been started by a certain anti-Semitic, pro-Nazi organisation to impede the prosecution of the war. Although urged to give a name to this movement, he refused.

There being obviously considerable feeling in the House on the whole subject, the Government later put up Sir SAMUEL HOARE, who promised that Members would be consulted with a view to reshaping the regulations; and on this Mr. FOOT withdrew his motion for their annulment.

Wednesday, November 1st.—The present situation in which large numbers of evacuated children have returned to their homes is proving very unsatisfactory both in town and country. The Bishop of WINCHESTER called attention to its problems this afternoon, urging that parents should be encouraged to get their children out of the danger areas, but that the mothers should not be expected to leave their husbands. The PRIMATE

was also worried. He saw school life and home life breaking up throughout the country, and he wondered if we had not taken too elaborate precautions.



IN ACTION ON THE HOME FRONT

Mr. ATTLEE in the debate on Old Age Pensions said that the Government would disregard the feeling in the country at their peril.

Lord DE LA WARR agreed that in both sets of areas children were not being improved. He announced that the Government had decided to reopen the schools in the danger zones as a preferable alternative to compulsory evacuation, but he insisted that parents would do far better to let their children go to the country. Criticism of the arrangements was all very well, but they had been designed on the assumption that there would be heavy bombing, and it was unfair to judge them by peace-time standards. (See Mr. P.'s Junior Cut for another aspect of the same question.)

A similar announcement was made in the Commons by Mr. LINDSAY.

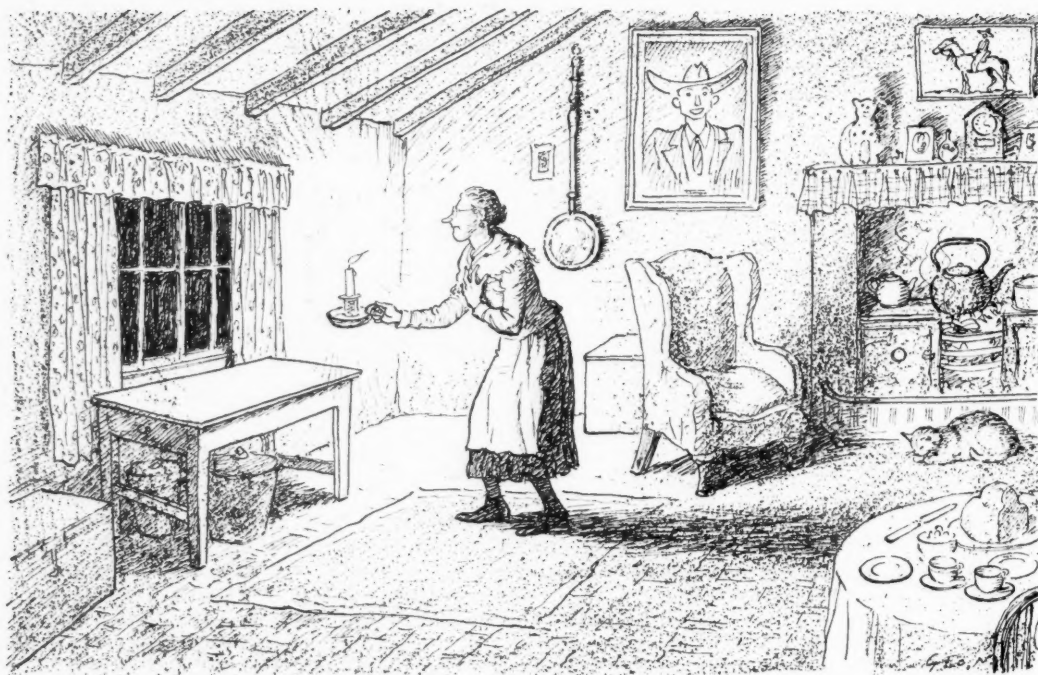
At the end of Questions, Mr. MORRISON gave the House details of his rationing scheme, which will come into force in the middle of December. It is much better than it might have been in that it only covers bacon (which includes ham) and butter, but it is a good deal worse when you consider how little is a quarter of a pound of each a week. Sugar is not to be rationed, provided that a pound a week per head is not exceeded. Mr. ALEXANDER found the scheme profoundly unsatisfactory, and warned Mr. MORRISON that the Opposition would shortly raise the whole matter.



IN ACTION ON THE HOME FRONT

"We [Liberals] have for a long time held the view that this country is threatened with a twofold danger—the danger of Nazi aggression abroad, and the danger of Nazi tendencies at home."—Mr. Dingle Foot.

gentlemen to enter and leave the country and adding to their difficulties by an unnecessarily rigid censorship of posts and cables. Even travellers from



What's wrong with this picture?

The House then passed to a good debate on the need for bigger old-age pensions, Members on all sides being agreed that something must be done for the many old people who, hit harder than ever by the rise in prices, were almost starving. Mr. ATTLEE demanded an immediate increase, Mr. HAMILTON KERR moved an amendment recognising the financial strain of the war but urging the Government to continue their inquiry; and this second course was the one to which Sir JOHN SIMON agreed, hoping that the report would be ready in two months.

Yesterday Sir WILLIAM JOWITT was welcomed back, a useful support for the Labour Party, and to-day the House gained a notable recruit in Commander STEPHEN KING-HALL, who comes in as National Labour.

Thursday, November 2nd.—After Lord STANHOPE had made a war statement on the lines of the P.M.'s in the Commons, the Lords considered the situation in India and then passed to the question of the definition of British war aims, Lord HALIFAX declaring that, since it was the Germans who had smashed confidence in the world, it

was for them to suggest how it could be restored. The time had not yet come, he thought, for an attempt to describe our goal in detail; an accurate definition of which in advance was neither reasonable nor possible.

On India two definite points of view emerged. Lord SAMUEL believed we were giving way too much to the Moslems, and asked that India should have a Privy Council and be treated as a Dominion when the time came to discuss peace terms; Lord SALISBURY believed it to be most unwise to bother the Government or the Viceroy at such a delicate moment, and prophesied that the whole issue might depend finally on the Mohammedan frame of mind. Lord ZETLAND replied that hope lay in what the Viceroy was doing in bringing the leaders of Congress and the Moslem League into consultation.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN had little fresh to say of action in his weekly statement, though he praised the quiet work of the Navy and the R.A.F. M. MOLOTOFF's speech had proved disappointing in Berlin, and "I am not disposed to disturb myself over the flights of fancy in which M. MOLOTOFF indulged when

describing the aims of the Allies . . . They are fully appreciated by the great majority of the nations of the world." He ended with the warmest praise for the loyalty and practical assistance being offered by the Dominions and the Colonies.

In the subsequent debate on evacuation and A.R.P., those who knew most about the subject agreed that it was far too soon to reduce the effort which had been made. One big raid, it was felt, would silence the present easy criticism.

NOTICE

PAPER RESTRICTION

Owing to the restriction on the supply of paper, it may not be possible to obtain PUNCH in the ordinary way.

Readers who desire to receive a copy regularly should place a definite order with their Newsagent or direct with PUNCH Office.

Waste

A BROKEN and decrepit figure is to be seen in these days walking the streets of East London in a hopeless and despairing sort of way that wrings the heart. It is me. Only a fortnight ago I was young and athletic. My cheery smile and light springy step attracted admiring glances wherever I went. That was before our local Boy Scout Commissioner put me in charge of the district collection of waste-paper. "Here is a job," he said, "that will suit you down to the ground. It will involve a good deal of hard work but it won't require much in the way of brains."

The Vicar of St. Commodious said that I was welcome to use his crypt for storage purposes. I called a meeting of the scout-masters and we parcelled the district out among them—so many streets to each troop. We had a lot of handbills printed saying that scouts would call next day to collect waste-paper. I rang up a waste-paper merchant and asked him to deliver fifty sacks. Every day the boys brought laden trek-carts of waste-paper. Every week the pulp-merchant called and took away the brimming sacks.

The Boy Scout Commissioner came round to see how we were progressing. He was impressed.

"Simpson," he said admiringly, "you are certainly making things hum."

He is a man chary of giving praise. I was deeply flattered. If I went on like this, I felt, I might one day be a Commissioner myself and not have to do any more work. He said that he was there to lend a hand, and he started to fill a sack with old books. He found a battered copy of *Three Men in a Boat* and sat down on my scout hat and started to read it. He enjoyed it, and when he slipped it in his pocket an hour later and went home he was all smiles. "Well done, Simpson," he said, grasping my hand cheerily. "You are certainly making things hum."

It was not until the next day, which was Sunday, that I realised how truly he had spoken. The Vicar called round to see me with an agitated face and said that five people had come to him after the service and complained of the smell of fish. I went round to the church with him, and we descended the stairs to the crypt. A small scout greeted me cheerily.

"We brought in a lovely lot of paper last night, Mr. Simpson," he said, "from that place in Wiltshire Road where they can the fish." I thanked him and he departed.

"When I lent you the crypt," said the Vicar, "I didn't bargain for this. It must be removed before the evening service."

I got hold of a couple of boys and a trek-cart, and we took the offending paper out into the street. We tried to find a home for it with the old Vicar of St. Poeticus, who is deaf and nearly blind, and whom we hoped would also have no sense of smell. We were wrong. We took it back to the cannery, but there was nobody there. All Sunday afternoon we paraded the streets. We tried to throw it in the canal, but a policeman said we couldn't do that, and he was surprised that scouts didn't know better.

In the end the two scouts said that they were feeling faint, what with lack of food and being enveloped all the time in the smell. So we dumped the

paper in my flat. The lady upstairs has already complained, also the people on either side. The lady opposite thought it was a gas-attack and has gone to stay with her sister in the country.

As for me, I wander the streets, a homeless outcast.

"CROOK AMATEUR HAS BILLIARDS
BREAK OF 812"
Heading in Northern Paper.

Is that news?

"It was not disclosed where the honeymoon would be spent. For travelling Mrs. — wore the lovely 5-tier wedding cake."
Argentine Paper.

Was it disclosed where?



"There are only the three regulars left now, Sir."

At the Play

"FRENCH FOR LOVE"
(CRITERION)

MUCH of the action of this play took place in a corner of the stage as remote from where I was sitting as if it had been in Siberia, and so I cannot speak truthfully of it as a whole; but I came away with the feeling that the run for which it seemed to be heading would be due much more to the polish of the acting and the rather deliberate eroticism of the theme than to any great merit of its own.

It must be said at once that it is neatly shaped. For a light comedy of improbable domestic upheaval it is balanced with unusual care, and its authors, Miss MARGUERITE STEEN and Mr. DEREK PATMORE, have imposed on themselves the satisfactory restriction of a single set. I think that where the play falls short is that its basic idea, the contrast between the British and the Gallic attitude to love, needs a constant flow of wit to keep it from growing a little crude and more than a little boring, and doesn't always get it. There is wit on tap, and of the right texture of cynicism; but one character monopolises it too much.

This is *Victor*, beautifully played by Mr. CECIL PARKER. United to a fussy pillar of South Coast suburbia, he had parted from her twelve years before, leaving her amicably and with a daughter to bring up. His leanings towards a freer life drew him across the Channel, where he set up for himself in a villa in the neighbourhood of Cannes, and in due course, having, one supposes, a natural respect for the more stable conventions of French fiction, discovered the perfect blend of housekeeper and mistress. When I tell you that she—*Hortense*—is played by Mlle. ALICE DELYSIA you will see that the beginning is a good one.

And so is the next move, which is to precipitate into this contented little Eden, *Amy*, the wife, *Gabrielle*, the daughter, just grown up, and *Gabrielle's* fearfully muscle-bound fiancé, *Robin*, the party arriving to ask for *Victor's* consent and played

respectively by Miss ATHENE SEYLER (not too well cast), Miss ROSALYN BOULTER and Mr. JOHN PENROSE.

About fifty letters to *Victor* on the subject of his daughter's marriage having gone unanswered and in fact unopened, *Amy* telegraphs and comes. Why she should care in the very slightest for the sanction of a husband who has so thoroughly demonstrated his contempt for marriage is one of a number of similar questions which arise, to be answered as a group by the reminder that these are creatures of fantasy and not of fact. As *Gabrielle* first came into the garden of the villa there was a look in the eye of the manservant, *Pierre* (Mr. CARL JAFFE), which showed unmistakably how one side of the action was to develop; and the other side got moving after dinner. Left alone to discuss the engagement, *Victor* questioned *Robin* about his amorous education, and finding it sternly neglected told him bluntly that clumsy inexperience was the last recommendation for which he wished.

There were, however, willing professors on the local staff. *Robin* confided his shock and confusion to *Hortense*, who happened to be feeling that *Victor* was taking her too much for granted. A sympathetic woman, she took him in hand. Meanwhile, *Pierre* had persuaded the impressionable *Gabrielle* to attend the annual rally at the shrine of Bacchus on the hills behind, and they came home with the dawn. At this point the whole affair might have got desperately, even tragically, out of hand; but British compromise triumphs, as we hope loyally it always will. *Gabrielle* sees *Pierre* to be a cad. *Robin*, blossoming marvellously and gathering abandon all the time, becomes once more her *beau idéal*. *Amy*, a slow woman to think, grasps the position of *Hortense* and whisks the children back to England. And *Hortense*, after a nicely judged display of temperament, agrees to stay on.

Mr. PARKER, as I said, has the best of it and is delightful. Mlle. DELYSIA is in her element. The others play up well, but it was asking an impossibility that Miss SEYLER should subdue the wit of her personality enough to give *Amy* her full quota of stupidity. ERIC.



CLOUDS IN THE MIDD

Amy Miss ATHENE SEYLER
Hortense Miss ALICE DELYSIA
Victor Mr. CECIL PARKER



LIFE CLASS

Robin Mr. JOHN PENROSE
Hortense Miss ALICE DELYSIA

Black

WE do not love you, black,
We find in you a lack
Of that uplifting smack
Which makes men gay;
We like red, green and blue;
White is fair wedlock's hue;
To put it bluntly, you
Are not that way.

Men shrink from you averse,
And now this black-out curse
Has made the matter worse,
Yet, even so,
Research may bring to light
Something in you that's bright,
And, though the chance be slight,
We'll have a go.

Woman, if lean, can wear
Black, should it suit her hair,
With an upstanding air;
The nigger, while
No beauty photograph,
Has an infectious laugh
That splits his face in half
And cures one's bile.

Oft, too, the rural spark
Blesses the kindly dark
For many an amorous lark
Albeit discreet,
And the black Indian sky
Means that the rains are nigh
Which help to modify
One's prickly heat.

Others I must ignore
But there is one point more,
One thing, and may I score
Much good therefrom,
Which must be firmly classed
By no means least if last:
I have acquired a vast
And sable Tom.

Barring a tongue that's pink
The creature's black as ink;
Black cats bring luck, men think;
If you'll work that
You, spite of all, shall be
As well esteemed by me
As that well-cushioned He,
My massive cat. DUM-DUM.



The Dilemma

From the Home Front

The Press Has a Look at Us.

A CORRESPONDENT has written to ask what conditions are really like down here. She likes to be able to picture, she says, as she sits by her fireside of an evening, just how our brave soldiers are spending their time. "I imagine you all," she writes, "sitting in your reading or writing rooms, busy with pen and paper, turning over the pages of the parcels of books sent you (what a splendid scheme!), or perhaps enjoying a harmless game of 'Nap' in a comfortable corner. But I should so like to know."

Well, well, I will say nothing to cause this lady a moment's distress. She has been reading about the Militia, or perhaps one of those despatches from "Our Special Correspondent with the B.E.F.," and she knows that compared with the hardships and inconveniences endured by civilians in this war, the path of the soldier is strewn with roses. The best thing to do, it seemed to me, was to ask one of these trained Special Correspondents to come down here and look us over. So I did that; and here is his report.

THE SOLDIER'S MECCA

ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNNING IN IDEAL CONDITIONS

(From our Special Correspondent)

The first thing one notices about X (I am forbidden to mention the name of this encampment for fear the Ministry of Information should get to know of it) is that it is simply not there. Three or four times I drove past the gates before realising that the group of tumble-down sheds and old

hayricks were really a cunningly-concealed gun-site. Even when I got inside I could hardly believe that men actually lived there, so desolate did the whole place seem.

"So you had difficulty in finding us?" observed the trim Eton-cropped sentry who stopped my car. (Members of the A.T.S. mount guard here to relieve the men for more essential duties.) "It's pretty well camouflaged, isn't it?" I agreed fervently, and had no difficulty in believing her next remark that even the Colonel of the Regiment once spent several minutes knocking at a haystack in an adjoining field under the impression that it was the Officers' Mess. The amusing thing was that after a time a goat came round the corner and the Colonel at once made a complaint to it that he had been kept waiting. This was a natural mistake, as many A.A. officers have taken to disguising their rank as far as possible. Nor have the men been forgotten. I was told that when marching to their action-stations they look, from the air, exactly like a flock of sheep.

Captain Y— (in private life he is plain Mr. Z—) came forward to greet me from the doorway of an old chicken-shed in which he has taken up his quarters. I stepped inside and gasped at the miraculous transformation that had taken place. The walls have been whitewashed, easy wooden chairs and an easy wooden table lend a homely aspect, and a cosy oil-stove provides ample warmth for the chilly evenings. The old hen-roost has gone and in its place the Captain's hammock hangs securely from two brightly-polished hooks. In the capacious laying-boxes he keeps his cocoa, biscuits and cheese, his slippers, writing materials and, for special occasions, a bottle of crème de menthe; while over the feeding-trays, now converted into a low mantleshef, hang his sword, set-square, protractors, and other instruments of his craft. The whole place has an air of quiet luxury unknown to the soldiers of the last war.

"Tell me Captain Y—," I asked, when we were comfortably ensconced, "are the men settling down happily in their new environment?" "The men are in excellent health," he replied, "and their spirit is—er—excellent. They have four pounds of fresh meat a day each, eight pounds of potatoes, two pints of tea and as much margarine and spinach as they want. There is, just at present, a shortage of cream, fresh-water fish and game-birds, but we are hoping that this will be overcome."

I gasped at the manner in which these soldiers of 1939 are entertained. "And their recreation?" I managed to ask. For answer Captain Y— led me round the camp and showed me the care that has been taken to ensure that no single man shall have a moment of ennui or boredom. Space forbids me to relate all that I saw—the billiard-room, cunningly disguised to look like a heap of bricks, the squash court, entered through a tiny gap in a row of sand-bags and deceptively labelled "For Auxiliary Firemen Only," the canteen and supper-room which looks from the outside like a dark and dirty old marquee. From these we passed on to what is, after all, the *raison d'être* of the whole encampment—the guns. For reasons easy to understand it is impossible entirely to camouflage or conceal these weapons, and the moment I saw a long barrel sticking out of a mound of swedes I gripped the Captain's arm and begged him to show me some of the marvels of modern anti-aircraft gunnery. I am not of course permitted to pass on all he told me, nor did he tell even me, I suspect, all he knew, but I saw and heard enough to convince me that any Nazi bomber which dares to fly over X will run a considerable risk of being, if not actually hit, at any rate a



"This is what comes of using vegetable substitutes."

good deal bothered by the fire of these daredevil gunners. I was permitted, for instance, to steal a glance at that instrument of uncanny precision, the predictor. This machine, worked by six men who pull levers and turn wheels at the orders of an N.C.O., not only tells the Commanding officer (or "Tiffy" as he is affectionately called in all A.A. Regiments) the time, date, temperature and height of station above sea-level—all vital facts in anti-aircraft gunnery—but also, by a complicated arrangement of pulleys, aims the guns at any point in the sky indicated by the height-finder. Thus at any moment the C.O. is enabled, simply by pressing a button on the panel in front of him, to fire off all his guns in the same direction—an enormous saving of time and money. I was told that only men of great skill, quickness of brain and delicacy of touch are selected to operate this amazing mechanism.

All too soon my time at X came to an end and I left the station full of admiration for the coolness and courage of the officers and men who man it—and full of satisfaction too at the remembrance of their comfortable, even luxurious quarters. As I made my good-byes Captain Y—laid a hand on my arm and pointed to a group of gunners busy constructing shelves for the Library and Rest-Room. "Splendid fellows!" he murmured, "I'm proud of them." And in my own small way I was proud of them too.

I hope this will give pleasure to my lady correspondent.

H. F. E.

YOU CAN POST PUNCH

MANY people have been in the habit after reading their newspapers, of posting them to friends and relatives abroad, or of buying copies specially for that purpose.

Under the censorship regulations it is no longer possible to allow private individuals to post newspapers and periodicals to any of the countries on what is known as the censorable list.

The reason for the prohibition is that printed matter affords easy opportunities of conveying information to enemy agents, and it is of course impossible for the Censor to check the identity of any sender.

But there is no reason why you should stop sending British newspapers, and therefore the British point of view, to your friends abroad.

All you have to do is to place a regular order direct with us or with a reputable newsagent. *Punch* will then be despatched on your behalf quicker than you yourself could send it off in peace time.

If you want to know which the censorable countries are, ask us or your newsagent.

There are special arrangements for posting letters and newspapers to members of the British Expeditionary Force. You can find out about them at any post office.



"D-drive very carefully—I-I don't know how you'll see."

"Oh, I never sees anythink. I jest flies straight like a arrow—you'd be surprised."

The Poet Under Orders

I HAVE been commandeered to write something bright and stirring
About the war; so I am now able to reveal how Goering,
Assisted by Himmler, made an apple-pie bed for Ribbentrop—
The Fuehrer, with tears in his eyes, begging them both to stop.
Unhappily, because of the black-out, Hermann climbed into the bed
Intended for Vonnie, and Adolf, choking with mirth, is said to have said:
"Ach! stop it, you blokes, for Himmel's seich—
Such goings-on in the Third Reich!"

Which dispenses with the absurd rumour
That the Nazis have no sense of humour.

Moreover, Herr Hitler, according to the Rome *Da Capo*,
Has now decreed that every man must be his own Gestapo;
That is to say, a German engaged in any anti-Nazi ramp
Must either shoot himself or commit his person to a concentration camp.

Mildred, switch off that wretched syncopation—
Let's hear if anything's got past the Ministry of Information:

"This is the B.B.C Home Service. There is nothing to add
To our former bulletin (nor the one before that, my lad).
A Copenhagen journal, however, reveals
That two Nazi spies, disguised as performing seals,
Were arrested last night in a music-hall in Dumfries—
Not liking their guttural bark, a man informed the police.
The Ministry of Economic Warfare announces that from to-day

A.R.P. workers will be paid by results—no bombs, no pay.

That is the end of the news.
As we have half an hour to lose,
Here is a gramophone record of 'Those Bureaucratic Blues.'

But perhaps you'd prefer
Happy Hamburg "on the air"?
Let's listen, without bias,
To D. J. Ananias:

"Winston Spencer Churchill,
He is no sportsman—*nein*?
'Twas he who sank the 'Jolly Yank,'
That sailed your Serpentine.
Nurse saw him with her spy-glass
As plain as plain could be,
And so did Dr. Goebbels
All the way from Germanee.
You poor deluded *nitwitz*!
If Churchill stoops so low
As to scuttle the yachts of tiny tots,
What will he *not* sink—no?

To-morrow night there will be a talk in dialogue
Between a well-fed dachshund and a half-starved English dog."

Why is the hotel proprietor sharpening his dirks?
He is preparing to call on the Office of Works.

"Where is the Grand Hotel belonging to my cousin's brother?"

"We commandeered the place last week for some good reason or other;
But after we'd fired the manager, the staff and all the guests

(At least we gave them time to put on more than their pants and vests),
And removed the furniture and fittings and other paraphernalia,
We then decided we much preferred the look of the New Regalia.

Now *isn't* that nice for your cousin's brother, Mr. Anstruther?"

Avoid embarrassing collisions with strangers when daylight closes;

Wear one of our False Phosphorescent Black-out Noses.

"Come into the garden, Maud,
The black-out night hath flown—
Hang out your washing on the Siegfried Line,
Use Maginot Soap alone."

Do your evacuees
Cough, splutter or sneeze,
Sneer at the cows and trees,
Or show other signs of unease?
If so, they are calling louder and louder
For a Bill Murphy War-condition Powder.

Good taste this Christmas will tend to be plainer;
Give your girl a pearl-studded respirator container.

I can't vouch for this—as a matter of fact it's one of Aunt Mabel's:
Swordfish are being trained in Nazi swimming-pools to cut transatlantic cables.

My barber tells me that Hitler has a gas under his hat
Poisonous to us but harmless to Germans (sounds familiar, that).

According to cook's brother, Stalin is really an Englishman named Brown;
Apparently he once played outside left for Luton Town,
So of course there's no question of his letting us down.

The butcher's boy declares that Hitler's great stunt
Is a huge machine, *not* on the Western Front,
Which catapults troops into any sector
Determined by the director.
It seems, therefore, that England is undone—
For by this means whole battalions can be thrown into London,
Or indeed hurled
To any part of this or even the next world.

As for our grocer—
(EDITOR: No, no, Sir!)

After the War

EVEN in these early stages," said Sympson, "one can't help wondering what the map of Europe will look like after the war."

"Or, for the matter of that," said Carstairs shrewdly, "the map of Asia."

"Or the map of Africa," interpolated Bolton.

"Or Australia," I added. Nobody mentioned America, partly out of delicacy but more because there were only four of us, and it seemed fair to take only one continent each. In our club there is none of that ungentlemanly spirit of smash-and-grab that is so rife in the world to-day.

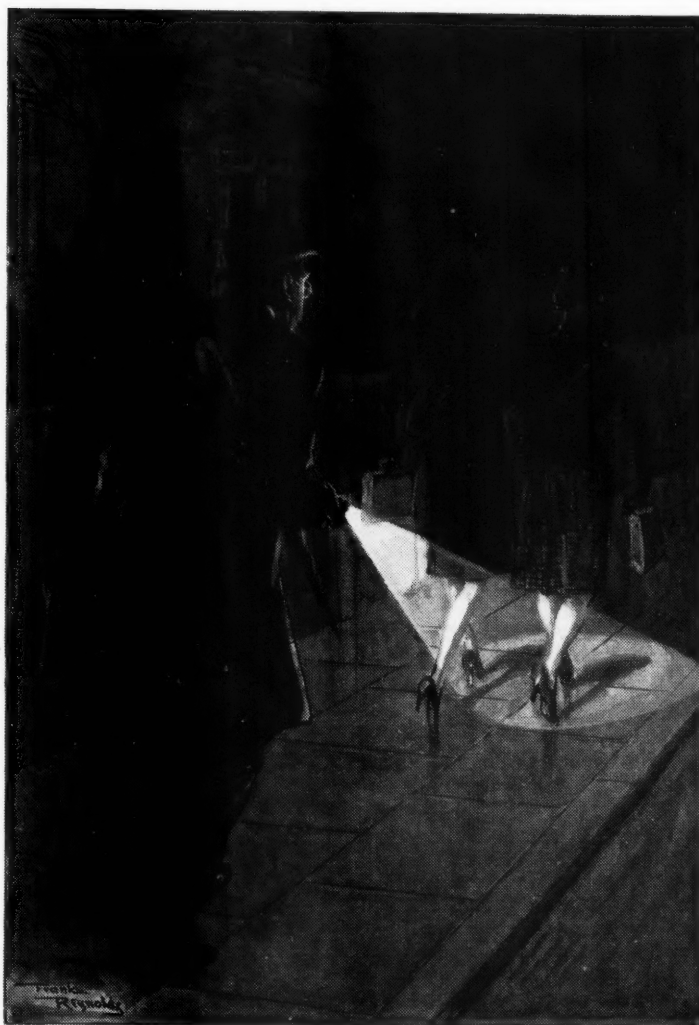
"Personally," said Sympson, "I think the people who frame the next peace treaty will be well advised to take drastic measures. The first thing I should do would be to make Europe a better shape, either square or oblong. This could easily be done by forming the demobilised soldiers into digging battalions, providing them with good spades, and setting them to work digging off all the knobs round the edge of Europe and filling up all the inlets until the thing becomes perfectly rectangular."

"I can't see," said Bolton, "how that would help."

"Wait a minute," said Sympson. "I would then fill in all the rivers. Rivers have always been a nuisance—look at the Vistula, for instance, and the Danube and the Rhine. Rivers being such a ridiculous shape and wandering about in different countries are a danger to the community. They should all be filled up. You would then have a square or oblong Europe capable of being divided up among the various nations in neat portions, according to the size of their populations. Rivers would be jettisoned entirely, but canals would be dug to take their place. There would be one or two canals per nation, according to the amount of their population and therefore the size of what may be called their slab of Europe."

"But what," said Carstairs, "about mountains and valleys?"

"Perfectly simple," said Sympson shortly. "Each slab of the new Europe would have an equal amount of mountains and valleys. This could be achieved by taking the tops off the mountains that were above standard height and shovelling the earth thus saved into the valleys that were below the standard depth. Thus we should



"Ah, there's Mrs. Smith and her sister Mabel."

have a Europe where all nations would have equal opportunities, and petty jealousies would no longer endanger the peace. One very great advantage of this plan would be that it would solve the post-war unemployment problem. Filling up the Bay of Biscay alone, I should imagine, would give work to tens of thousands of ex-soldiers, and even more would be used in levelling the Alps."

"But do you think," said Bolton, "that even if we gave all the nations equality there would be an end of bickering? I have no wish to be

invidious or to mention names, but there is one particular nation that has shown itself on several occasions in the past to be, if I may say so, a shade unreasonable."

Sympson has a good deal of native shrewdness, and he guessed after a moment's thought to which nation Bolton referred.

"We could get over that difficulty," he said, "by letting them have the Bay of Biscay as their territory, and making sure that they occupied it just before it was filled up."



"Give Miss Ditherby and Miss Petberwick your imitation of an air-raid siren, dear."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Generalissima

MISS JANET MACKAY pays HENRIETTA MARIA a compliment after that lady's own heart in maintaining that had she been a boy she would have been HENRI QUATRE's greatest son. This is not the usual English reading of CHARLES I's much-maligned wife; but then HENRIETTA, as a proud daughter of France and a fervent Papist wedded to the vacillating, rather bourgeois and fervently Protestant King of England, had no contemporary to bear witness to her trials except the French Ambassador, DE TILLIÈRES. His evidence, uncomfortably substantiating our insular non-observance of the conditions of HENRIETTA's marriage treaty, it has been the fashion to misprize. Starting, however, as is only fair, from the French point of view, MISS MACKAY turns a pathetic little bride into a tearful termagant; the termagant into a charming matron; and the matron into a "Generalissima" who raised nearly two million pounds for the Royalist cause and kept nothing for herself but rings with no stones in them. It is a gallant and—in its final dignity of widowhood—almost a great story. *Little Madam* (BELL, 15/-), thus deftly, gracefully and sympathetically handled, has found an ideal biographer.

Drama Underground

Somewhere in Czecho-Slovakia there is an explosion in a coal-mine. Three miners are entrapped and for two or three days some seven of their fellow-workers—for it is only with *The First Rescue Party* (ALLEN AND UNWIN, 7/6) that we are immediately concerned—are engaged in a perilous and desperate attempt to release them. Such is

the stark and simple theme of a posthumous novel by KAREL ČAPEK, and that novel will rank with the finest work of a lamented man of genius. For it is an extraordinarily powerful piece of imaginative reconstruction. The feverish yet ordered labour, the darkness and the heat, the imminent danger of falling rock and breaking timbers and the more dreaded gas—these things are presented as by one who had shared in the adventure. But that is not the major part of ČAPEK's achievement. What one must admire even more is how, with no expense of analysis but in the very process of their self-disregarding endeavour, the personalities of the several miners, be they merry or dour, serene or violent, are realised and expressed; and how, in spite of warring elements among them, they are gradually fused by virtue of that endeavour into a temporary entity. And best of all is the boy *Standa*, the youngest of the party, through whose eyes we are shown the whole thing. The maturing by intense experience of a romantic adolescent—and never has romantic adolescence been more delicately portrayed—is a little masterpiece of progressive characterisation.

Heaven and Hesperides

It was maintained by JOHN EVELYN that planters of trees are usually blessed with good health and live to a prosperous old age—an opinion derived by the author of *Silva* from Tartar astrologers (and his own experience) and enthusiastically endorsed on one of the pleasantest pages of *Orchard's Bay* (SHEED AND WARD, 8/6). There is a pleasantly Caroline flavour about this record of horticultural and spiritual activities, though the horticulture is soundly based on ROBINSON of Gravetye and the spirituality derived mainly from ST. AUGUSTINE. With AUGUSTINE'S God securely established overhead and forty south-sloping acres of the Isle of Wight underfoot, Mr. ALFRED NOYES is happily situated for the chronicling of his meditations and enterprises, in verse or prose as the spirit moves him. He can grouse at times—as every decent Englishman must—at those "mysterious gangs in the cities" who creep and intrude and climb into every country fold nowadays, not sparing the poet's own Guernseys. But, take it as a whole, this is a sweet-tempered book and not to be confounded with the rather discreditable volumes of pastoral prattle to which a casual glance might assign it.



HALLO — DUMH/113/1 —
AND HOW IS DUMH/113/4?
FINE, THANKS, AMBB/154/1,
AND WHAT NEWS OF AMBB/154/2?...



flight of wishful thinking on world politics, the outbreak of war has made it look rather ridiculous. Cockeyed ratiocination is not new in America or unknown in Britain, but for sheer fatuosity we know nothing to beat the chapter in which Mr. QUINCY HOWE invites the United States to choose between "fighting a losing war for democracy or fighting a war that might just conceivably prove victorious if a new American Empire is the goal."

A Personal World

Mr. MAURICE COLLIS has the faculty of dealing with both the improbable and the impossible in a highly convincing manner. He combines the flamboyance of renaissance poetry with the meticulousness of a police report. *Sanda Mala* (FABER AND FABER, 7/6) is the name of the garrulous *dea ex machina* in a novel which from time to time threatens to follow familiar lines but is repeatedly hurled off the permanent way. The characters are hard-edged and downright. In other hands they might easily become unconvincing and merely grotesque, but the author wraps them in his own delightful cloud of fancy and the reader accepts them at their true fairy value. Those who have enjoyed that masterpiece *She Was a Queen* will hasten to purchase this new work from the same pen. This is a minor Collis, but still a strikingly individual performance.

Lotus Land, New England

In one of the various moods which the place induced in him *Jim Calder* saw *Wickford Point* (HALE, 8/6) as "a floating island that once had been solidly attached to the mainland . . . severed from realities . . . and drifting off, a self-contained entity, into a misty sea." And that is just how he, or Mr. JOHN P. MARQUAND who stands sponsor for him and his exasperating cousins, very successfully presents it to us—as a sort of New England Cythera or Lotus Land, where, if it is not actually always afternoon, the inhabitants chronically suffer, except for rare spasms of aimless energy, from the lethargy proper to that time. Ever since *John Brill* (a hirsute humbug whom Mr. BEERBOHM might have invented) wrote his bad poetry and hobnobbed with Emerson and Hawthorne, the *Brills* have been not as other folk; they have lived in a fantastic and anarchic world of their own, scornful of common endeavour but impotent to organise the life they dream. Yet it is the charming and helpless

Clothilde, a *Brill* only by marriage, who is the focal point of this feckless crew, and it is she and the genius of Wickford itself that hold *Jim Calder* in reluctant bondage. She is a passive vamp; her daughter *Bella* is an active and unscrupulous one; and *Bella* also has the pathos of her own futility. Mr. MARQUAND's story, with its skilful evocation of a special atmosphere, keeps on a high level of remote yet human comedy.

Experts

To anyone who, whether as collector or dealer, is interested in postage-stamps, *Cancelled in Red* (HEINEMANN, 7/6) will be exceptionally welcome. But those of us who are not even remotely connected with philately will readily understand why Mr. HUGH PENTECOST's story won the prize offered by Messrs. DODD MEAD in America. For its crimes are neatly and effectively staged, and the leading actors, whether suspicious or suspected, are drawn so clearly that it is easy to become on intimate terms with them. In an excellent cast *Inspector Bradley* and a stamp-dealer's secretary, *Ellen Dixon*, with an office-boy to accompany them, take the chief honours. Perhaps Mr. PENTECOST did not find it easy to discover a climax, but the one that he provides is a sound enough finish to a prizeworthy yarn.

Publisher and Sinners

The sub-title chosen for *The Ghost of Truth* (GOLLANCZ, 7/6) is "A Scandal in Two Parts," and no good reason exists for complaining of the selection. Indeed it is conceivable that some of Mr. JOHN NEWTON

CHANCE's readers may think that the frank eccentricities of his bibulous hard-swearing squire, *Tom Ranworth*, are unnecessarily exaggerated. But Mr. CHANCE makes ample amends in his attractive portrait of *Tom's* granddaughter and, in this girl's attempt to restore the financial fortunes of her family by writing a best-seller, fact and fiction are combined with a result that is at once happy and disastrous. Mr. CHANCE cannot help being amusing, but until he ceases to laugh so frequently at everyone (including himself) he will not do full justice to his exceptional abilities.

The Indian Tree Trick

"The tracker with me climbed up another tree and pulled it up after him out of harm's way."—*Indian Weekly*.



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